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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine how newspapers from both northern and southern states handled news photographs of the homecoming of Lieutenant Robert Goodman, a black Air Force pilot who was captured and then released by Syria. This report focuses specifically on the newspapers' presentation of Lt. Goodman's interracial marriage. The study sought to determine whether newspapers carried two photographs of Goodman's homecoming--his arrival at Andrews Air Force Base and a press conference later that day at the White House--and whether Goodman's wife was systematically excluded from the photo coverage. All daily newspapers from 10 southern and 8 northern states were analyzed for three consecutive days in January 1984. The findings indicated that there was a systematic exclusion of Goodman's wife from the photographic coverage of his homecoming. However, the decision to exclude her was not uniform among the papers sampled. While both northern and southern papers cropped Goodman's wife from photos, northern papers, more consistently than southern papers, did so. The southern papers also gave the story better visual coverage overall. While specific editorial judgments and motives cannot be anticipated, it appeared that southern papers were more liberal in their coverage. The results suggest that, by including Goodman's wife, southern papers were providing a subtle legitimation of interracial couples, while the northern papers conveyed a veiled message reinforcing same-race marriages. (A list of newspapers studied as well as copies of the two photographs are appended.) (HTH)

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A Hero's Homecoming: A Comparative Analysis of Photographic Coverage

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On December 4, 1983, Lt. Robert Goodman was shot down and captured by Syrian troops. Newspapers across the country carried a photo of Goodman restrained by his captors. It was a story of national importance, and one more frightening element of the often confusing and explosive drama surrounding the United State's involvement in the turbulent Middle East.

The story gained momentum and importance as the Reverend Jesse Jackson, then a hopeful for the Democratic presidential nomination, negotiated the safe release of Goodman. On January 3, 1984, in a coup de grace which upstaged White House diplomatic efforts, Jackson returned to the United States with Lt. Goodman.

President Reagan received Jackson and Goodman, plus members of Goodman's family at a White House ceremony. The White House ceremony brought to light the political and social complexities of the event. One of the more subtle social complexities involved Goodman's family. Goodman, a black, is married to a white woman. This study examined photographs of Goodman's homecoming in an effort to systematically analyze how newspapers, on either side of the Mason-Dixon line, handled the photographic coverage of an interracial couple.

Interracial marriages have nearly tripled since 1970. According to the 1980 Census, 155,000 couples are black/white.[1] While this is only a tiny percentage of all married couples, the growth of this social trend is obvious.

Previous Research

Research on blacks, in the past, seems to have been concentrated in two broad categories. The first of these deals with media coverage

of black issues and the media's attempt to better serve the needs and interests of the black community. Some of these studies have examined black's media use,[2] concluding that newspapers and radio exposure between blacks and whites reflect observed differences in social position and geography. The same study found black's exposure to television distinctly different from those patterns evident among white viewers.

Another study[3] examined the role of the media in urban management. This research analyzed the role of the press and quality of coverage in city elections. This particular study concluded by proposing different strategies for communicating with ghetto residents.

Along the same line, a research article by Schneider[4] analyzed Seattle's Media-Black Council. The purpose of the Council was to better communication and ease racial tension.

The second broad category of research on blacks is comprised of studies, many of which are content analyses, which attempt to assess the frequency and quality of roles portrayed by blacks in the media. Included in this category are studies which examined the role of race in an analysis of inter-racial television entertainment[5]; a content analysis of blacks in "Playboy" cartoons[6]; a content analysis of black visibility in news and news-picture magazines[7]; the social effects of intergrated advertising[8] and an analysis of the appearance of blacks during three seasons of television programs.[9] The collective results of these studies indicate that the role and portrayal of blacks in the mass media has improved since the 1950s.

However, the results also seem to conclude that not enough has been done by the media to provide realistic, representative portrayals of blacks.

The impetus for much of this research seems to spring from the 1968 Kerner Commission Report. The Kerner Commission was only peripherally dedicated to examining the role of the press in the civil unrest of the sixties. However, the conclusions of the commission were sufficiently negative and alarming to put the media on notice. The specific conclusions of the Kerner Commission were, first, the media "despite incidents of sensationalism, inaccuracies and distortions . . . on the whole made a real effort to give a balanced, factual account. . . ."[10] Secondly, that despite the effort, the overall effect of the portrayals of violence were "an exaggeration of both mood and event."[11] The third conclusion of the Kerner Commission was that the media "thus far failed to report adequately on the causes and consequences of civil disorder and the underlying problems of race relations."[12]

The strident urgency of the 1960s and 1970s has past. Many of the major changes desired by blacks have indeed been instituted. Society is much more equal in its treatment of blacks today than it was 25 years ago.

However, problems still exist. A cursory examination of any large circulation newspaper or national news magazine will find reports of Affirmative Action squabbles, quota disputes and busing conflicts. The integration process is still incomplete and controversial. It is the role of the press, in subtle intergration issues, that is the

concern of this research. The real issue at stake, is whether the media through errors of omission, rather than commission, are hindering and retarding further social integration.

Warren Breed,[13] using primarily a functionalist prespective, examined this issue in research designed to analyze the extent to which the media "bury" topics which are perceived to be dysfunctional to societal order and cohesion. Breed assumed, as have others,[14] that one of the latent functions of the media is the expression and repetition of traditional and newly emergent cultural patterns that serve to reinforce traditional beliefs and practices while explaining new socio-cultural roles.[15]

Indeed, in his research, Breed found evidence that the media reinforce certain stable societal beliefs to the exclusion of other, dysfunctional cultural patterns.[16]

It is from this theoretical perspective that this research chose to examine the extent to which, in a narrow, single instance, the media either served to portray new, non-traditional roles or chose to reinforce the status quo.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study is to determine if newspapers carried two photographs of Robert Goodman's homecoming: his arrival at Andrews Air Force Base on January 4, 1984 and later that same day during a press conference at the White House.

A second purpose is to determine if Goodman's wife was systemically excluded from that photo coverage.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between a newspaper's geographic area of distribution: the North versus the South and their likelihood to run the two photographs of Goodman and his wife?

2. What is the relationship between a newspaper's circulation and its likelihood to run the two photographs of Goodman and his wife?

3. What is the relationship between a newspaper's time of distribution and its likelihood to run the two photographs of Goodman and his wife?

4. What is the relationship between a newspaper's group membership status and its likelihood to run the two photographs of Goodman and his wife?

Method

All daily newspapers from 10 southern states were included in the sample. The states were Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, Texas, North Carolina and South Carolina. (See Appendix A)

Also included in the sample were all daily papers from eight selected northern states. These states were Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New York. The District of Columbia was also included in this sample. (See Appendix B)

Three days (January 4, 5 and 6, 1984) were analyzed and coded for each of the papers in the sample. The following items were coded: (See Appendix C)

1. Did the Air Force Base photograph and/or the White House photograph run?

2. If yes, how many columns were the photos?

3. If yes, on what page did the photos run?

4. If yes, was Goodman's wife included or excluded from the photo?

5. If yes, what was the photo byline?

Characteristics Of The Sample

The Library of Congress receives 48 daily newspapers from the 10 southern states included in the sample. From the eight selected states and the District of Columbia, the Library of Congress receives 47 daily newspapers. Total sample size is 95 newspapers.

The newspapers were further categorized as follows: circulation of less than 50,000 (21.1%); 50,000-100,000 (24.2%); 100,001-250,000 (34.7%) and papers with circulation of more than 250,000 (20%). Almost three-fourths (73.7%) of the newspapers sampled are members of a newspaper group. Slightly over one half (54.7%) publish in the morning; 31.6% publish in the afternoon and 13.7% publish an all-day newspaper.

Findings

Air Force Photo

Overall, 46.3% of the 95 newspapers ran the photograph of Goodman arriving at Andrews Air Force Base on January 4, 1984. Most of the papers (84%) ran the photograph two or three columns wide. Just less

than one-half (48%) ran the photograph on the front page, and 80% ran the photograph with his wife included. Also, 77% ran the Associated Press photograph. (See Appendix D)

Geographic Comparison

Of the southern papers, 45.8% ran the Air Force photograph, while 46.6% of the northern papers ran it. (See Table 1) In the southern papers, 42% ran the photograph on the front page, while 50% of the northern newspapers ran the photograph on the front page. In the southern papers, 14% cropped out his wife, while 27.3% cropped her out. Additionally, 56% of those newspapers ran the photograph of Goodman without his wife on the front page, while 44% ran the photograph on the inside.

White House Photo

Overall, 68.4% of the total sample ran a photograph of Goodman during the White House press conference on January 4, 1984. (See Table 2) An overwhelming majority the newspapers (84.6%) ran the photograph at least three columns wide--one half the width of a newspaper. Additionally, most of the newspapers (81.5%) ran it on the front page, and 56.9% did not crop out his wife. The photo byline for the White House picture was not dominated by one wire service; 56.9% ran an Associated Press picture; 33.8% ran an United Press International picture; and 9.2% of the newspapers sent their own photographer. (See Appendix E) Surprisingly, 5% of the northern and southern newspapers chose not to run the White House story at all.

Table 1

Photo Coverage: Both Overall and By Region

	Air Force Photo	Wife Included	White House Photo	Wife Included	Reagan/ Jackson Photo
Southern	45.8%	86%	72.9%	62.8%	27%
Northern	46.8%	72.7%	63.8%	50%	21.2%
Overall/Combined	46.3%	80%	68.4%	56.9%	23.1%

Geographic Comparison

Almost three quarters (72.9%) of the 48 southern newspapers ran the White House photograph, while only 63.8% of the 47 northern papers chose to run a press conference photograph that included Goodman. (Note: Many newspapers chose to run a picture of Jesse Jackson and Ronald Reagan pointing opposite direction. (See Appendix F and Table 1) In the southern papers, 62.8% ran both Goodman and his wife. In the northern papers, only 50% chose to run the couple.

Almost all (95.5%) of southern papers that ran Goodman and his wife during the White House press conference ran the photograph on the front page. Only 86.7% of the northern papers that did not crop out Goodman's wife ran the photograph on the front page.

Almost one half of the total sample (South: 45.8% and North: 46.8%) chose to run both photographs. Few papers in the South (6.2 percent) chose not the run either photo. In the North, however, 17% of the papers failed to run either photo.

Circulation Variable

Newspapers with less than 50,000 circulation represented 21% of the sample. Of those newspapers, 40% ran an Air Force photograph. In both the southern and the northern newspapers, less than one half (South = 41.7%; non-South = 37.5%) ran the picture. For the White House photo, 45% of all the smaller dailies ran a photograph, while in the North, only 25% of the smaller papers ran one. (See Table 2)

Newspapers with a daily circulation from 50,000 to 100,000 represented 24% of the sample. Overall, 44% of those papers ran an

Table 2

Photo Coverage: By Circulation

	Air Force Photo	White House Photo
Less than 50,000 (N=20)		
Southern	41.7%	58.3%
Northern	37.5%	25%
Overall	40%	45%
50,001 to 100,000 (N=22)		
Southern	37.5%	87.5%
Northern	57.1%	28.6%
Overall	44%	69.9%
100,001 to 250,000 (N=23)		
Southern	57.1%	71.4%
Northern	47.4%	68.4%
Overall	51.5%	69.7%
More than 250,000 (N=19)		
Southern	50%	66.7%
Northern	46.2%	100%
Overall	47.4%	89.5%

Air Force photograph. By geographic area, 37.5% of the southern papers ran a photograph, while 57.1% of the northern papers ran one. A White House photograph ran in 69.9% of all newspapers. More than three fourths (87.5%) of the southern papers ran a photograph, while just 28.6% of the northern papers ran one.

Newspapers with a daily circulation from 100,001 to 250,000 represented 35% of the sample. More than one half (51.5%) of those newspapers ran an Air Force photograph. By geographic area, 57.1% of the southern newspapers ran an Air Force photograph, while 47.4% of the northern papers ran one. In coding for a White House photograph, 69.7% of all newspapers ran a photograph. Almost three fourths (71.4%) of the southern papers ran a White House photograph, while 68.4% of the northern papers ran a White House photograph.

Daily newspapers with a circulation of more than 250,000 represented 20% of the sample. Almost one half (47.4%) of those papers ran an Air Force photograph. In the South, 50% of the papers ran a photograph, while 46.2% of the northern papers ran one. Overall, 89.5% of the larger papers ran a White House photograph. More than two thirds (66.7%) of the southern papers ran one, while 100% of the larger northern papers ran a White House photograph.

Time of Distribution

Of the 95 newspapers in the sample, 54.7% are morning papers. Of those papers, 32.7% ran an Air Force photograph. (It should be noted that Goodman arrived at Andrews Air Force Base in the very early hours of January 4, 1984.) By geographic area, only 36.4% of the southern

morning papers and 26.3% of the northern morning papers chose to run an Air Force photograph.

Conversely, of the morning papers, 78.8% chose to run a White House photograph. By geographic comparison, 81.8% of the southern morning papers and 73.7% of the northern morning papers ran a White House photograph.

Afternoon papers constituted 31.5% of the sample. Of those papers, 60% chose to run an Air Force photograph. By geographic comparison, 44% of the southern papers and 66.7% of the northern papers ran an Air Force photo. Of the afternoon papers, 50% chose to run a White House photo. Comparing geographically, 55.6% of the southern afternoon ran a White House photograph, while 47.6% of the northern papers ran a photograph.

Of the total sample, 13.6% are all-day publications. Of those, 69.2% ran an Air Force photograph By geographic area, 100% of the southern all-day publications ran a photograph of Goodman arriving at Andrews Air Force Base. In striking comparison only 42.9% of the northern papers ran a photograph. Of the all-day papers, 69.2% chose to run a White House photograph. By geographic area, only half of the southern papers ran a White House photograph. Of the northern papers 85.7% included a White House photograph in their coverage.

Group Member Variable

Of the 95 papers in the sample, 73.7% are members of a group. Of those group members, 50% ran a photograph of Goodman arriving at Andrews Air Force Base. Also, 70% of the group members chose to run a photograph of Goodman during the press conference at the White House.

Discussion

The findings indicate that there was a systematic tendency to exclude Goodman's wife from the photograph coverage of his homecoming. However, the decision to exclude Goodman's wife was not uniform among the papers sampled. While papers on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line cropped Goodman's wife from photo coverage, northern papers, more consistently than southern papers, excluded Goodman's wife.

Compared to southern papers, twice as many northern papers chose to crop Goodman's wife from the Air Force photo. From this we can conclude that there was an apparent relationship between geography and photo coverage. The same relationship, although not as strong, is evident in the analysis of the White House photo. More southern papers carried the photo with Goodman's wife, than did their northern counterparts.

Evidence of this relationship is again apparent in examining photo coverage and circulation size. Overall, in comparing these two variables, the southern papers tended to give greater photo coverage for both the Air Force and the White House photos than the North. The two exceptions are northern papers (circulation 50,000-100,000) who ran the Air Force photo more often than southern papers of the same size. The second exception occurs with papers whose circulation is 250,000 or greater. All (100%) the northern papers with large circulation of 250,000 or greater ran the White House photo compared to two-thirds (66.7%) of the southern papers. These exceptions, in some cases, may be attributable to time of distribution.

In analyzing the time of distribution variable, there is again, a slight tendency for southern papers to devote more coverage to Goodman's return.

Among morning papers, although slightly over one-third ran the nearly 24-hour-old Air Force photo, there was a greater percentage of southern papers which carried the photo. The same held true for the White House photo.

The afternoon and all-day papers provided mixed results. More northern afternoon papers ran the Air Force and the White House photos; more southern papers all-day papers ran the Air Force photo. And more northern all-day papers ran the White House photos. Although the relationship is weaker, there was a tendency for southern papers, irrespective of distribution time, to carry more Air Force and White House photo coverage.

Group membership, as a variable, was inconclusive. Whether or not a paper was group-owned was not a salient factor with respect to photo coverage (with or without his wife) of Goodman's return to the U.S.

The observed differences between North and South are intriging. Intuitively, the expectation is that northern metro dailies, serving large black populations, would provide adequate coverage of this national event. Table 3 clearly illustrates that some northern dailies failed in this effort.

The southern papers not only chose to include Goodman's wife more often than northern papers, they also gave the story better visual coverage overall. While specific editorial judgments and motives

Table 3

Photo Coverage: Large Northern Cities with Large Black Populations

City	Paper	Ran Air Force Photo	Wife Included	Ran White House Photo	Wife Included
Baltimore	News American	No		No	
	Sun	No		Yes	No
	Evening Sun	No		Yes	No
Boston	Globe	No		Yes	Yes
	Herald	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Christian Science Monitor	No		Yes	Yes
Chicago	Tribune	No		Yes	No
	Sun-Times	No		Yes	Yes
Cincinnati	Enquirer	No		Yes	No
Cleveland	Plain Dealer	No		No	
Columbus	Citizen-Journal	No		No	
	Dispatch	Yes	Yes	No	
Detroit	Free Press	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	News	No		Yes	Yes
New York	Times	No		Yes	Yes
	Post	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Newsday	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Daily News	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Philadelphia	Inquirer	No		Yes	No
Pittsburgh	Press	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Post-Gazette	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Washington	Post	Yes	No	Yes	No

cannot be anticipated, it appears that southern papers were more liberal in their coverage. By including Goodman's wife, southern papers were providing a subtle legitimation of interracial couples.

On the other hand, northern papers conveyed a veiled message reinforcing same-race marriages. The northern papers mirrored traditional cultural norms; while southern papers mirrored newly-emergent norms. This does not mean to imply that the southern papers' photo coverage was socially dysfunctional; it can instead be interpreted as the advancement of social practices consistent with the goals of integration. It is, therefore, functional.

Social integration has been, and continues to be, a noble cause. Further research is needed to determine the role of the media in the process.

Footnotes

[1]Statistical Abstracts of the United States 1984, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Dec. 1983.

[2]Leo Bogart, "Negro and White Media Exposure: New Evidence," Journalism Quarterly, 49: 15-21 (1972).

[3]Robert Paul Boynton and Deil S. Wright, "The Media, the Masses and Urban Management," Journalism Quarterly, 47:3-19 (1970).

[4]Lawrence Scheider, "A Media-Black Council: Seattle's 19-Month Experiment," Journalism Quarterly, 47:439-449 (1970).

[5]Patricia C. Donagher, Rita Wicks, Robert M. Liebert and Emily S. Davidson, "Race, Sex and Social Example: An Analysis of Character Portrayal on Inter-racial Television Entertainment," Psychological Reports, 37:1023-1034 (1975).

[6]Bradley Greenberg and Sandra Kahn, "Blacks in Playboy Cartoons," Journalism Quarterly, 47:557-560 (1970).

[7]Guido Stempel III, "Visibility of Blacks in News and News-Picture Magazines," Journalism Quarterly, 48:337-339 (1971).

[8]Keith Cox, "Social Effects of Integrated Advertising," Journal of Advertising Research, 10:41-44 (1970).

[9]Joseph Dominick and Bradley S. Greenberg, "Three Seasons of Blacks on Television," Journal of Advertising Research, 10:21-28 (1970).

[10]Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, The New York Company, 1968, p. 363.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Warren Breed, "Mass Communication and Social Integration," in Dexter, Lewis A. and White, David M., (eds.), People, Society and Mass Communications, Three Free Press of Glencoe, 1964, pp. 183-199.

[14]Louis Wirth, "Consenus and Mass Communication," American Sociologist, 13:1-15 (February, 1948) and Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert K. Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action," in Wilbur Schramm and Donald F. Roberts, (eds.), The Process and Effects of Mass Communication, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971, pp. 554-578.

[15]Breed, op. cit., p. 187.

[16]Ibid., p. 198.

Appendix A

Southern Newspapers

City, State	Newspaper
Alabama	
Mobile	Mobile Register
Birmingham	Birmingham News
Montgomery	Montgomery Advertiser
Florida	
Jacksonville	Florida Times Union
Pensacola	Pensacola Journal
Orlando	Orlando Sentinel
Miami	Miami Herald
St. Petersburg	St. Petersburg Times
Tallahassee	Tallahassee Democrat
Tampa	Tampa Tribune
Georgia	
Augusta	Augusta Chronicle
Atlanta	Atlanta Journal
	Atlanta Constitution
	Savannah Morning News
	Columbus Ledger
Louisiana	
Baton Rouge	State Times
Shreveport	The Times
New Orleans	Times-Picayune/State-Item
Mississippi	
Jackson	Clarion-Ledger
Meridian	Meridian Star
North Carolina	
Raleigh	News & Observer
Wilmington	Wilmington Morning Star
Asheville	Asheville Citizen
Greensboro	Greensboro Daily News
Durham	Durham Sun
Charlotte	Charlotte Observer
Fayetteville	Fayetteville Observer
South Carolina	
Greenville	Greenville News
Charleston	The News-Courier
Columbia	The State

Appendix A (continued)

City, State	Newspaper
Tennessee	
Knoxville	Knoxville Journal
Memphis	Commercial-Appeal
Nashville	The Tennessean
Chattanooga	Chattanooga Times
Texas	
Houston	Houston Chronicle
	Houston Post
Austin	Austin American-Statesman
El Paso	El Paso Times
Dallas	Dallas Times-Herald
	Dallas Morning News
Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi Caller
San Antonio	San Antonio Express
Virginia	
Petersburg	The Progress Index
Lynchburg	Lynchburg News
Richmond	Richmond Times-Dispatch
Norfolk	Ledger-Star
	Virginia-Pilot
Roanoke	Roanoke Times & World-News

Appendix B

Northern Papers

City, State	Newspaper
District of Columbia	Washington Post
Illinois	
Springfield	State Journal-Register
Chicago	Chicago Tribune
	Sun Times
Peoria	Journal State
Indiana	
Fort Wayne	The News-Sentinel
Evansville	Evansville Courier
South Bend	South Bend Tribune
Indianapolis	The Indianapolis Star
	Indianapolis News
Maryland	
Baltimore	The Evening Sun
	News-American
	The Sun
Frederick	Frederick Post
Salisburg	The Daily Times
Annapolis	The Capital
Massachusetts	
Boston	Boston Globe
	Boston Herald
	Christian Science Monitor
Springfield	Morning Union
Worchester	Evening Gazette
Michigan	
Detroit	Detroit Free Press
	Detroit News
Grand Rapids	Grand Rapids Press
Lansing	Lansing State Journal
Siginaw	Siginaw News
New York	
Albany	Knickerbocker News
Buffalo	Buffalo News
New York	New York Times
	New York Post
	Daily News
Long Island	Newsday
Rochester	Democrat & Chronicle

Appendix B (continued)

City, State	Newspaper
Ohio	
Cleveland	The Plain Dealer
Columbus	Columbus Citizen-Journal
	Columbus Dispatch
Cincinnati	Cincinnati Enquirer
Toledo	The Blade
Youngstown	Youngstown Vindicator
Dayton	Dayton Daily News
Pennsylvania	
Scranton	Scranton Times
Erie	Erie Daily Times
Harrisonburg	Evening News
	The Patriot
Philadelphia	Philadelphia Inquirer
Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh Press
	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Appendix C

TALLY SHEET FOR GOODMAN STUDY

		Coding
Name of Newspaper	_____	
City, State	_____	1. _____
Circulation	_____	2. _____
Political Affiliation	_____	3. _____
Group? Yes/No	_____	4. _____
AM/PM/ALL DAY/	_____	5. _____
Andrews Air Force Base	Yes/No _____	6. _____
	Cols. _____	7. _____
	Pg. # _____	8. _____
	Wife? _____	9. _____
	Byline _____	10. _____
Comments:		
White House	Yes/No _____	11. _____
	Cols. _____	12. _____
	Pg. # _____	13. _____
	Wife? _____	14. _____
	Byline _____	15. _____
Comments:		